

REMARKS

This reply is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated December 12, 2007.

Claims 58, 66-67, and 71 are currently amended.

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-14, 16-34, 50-57, and 63 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claims 58-62 and 64-72 are currently pending and are in condition for allowance.

Entry of the foregoing amendment and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected Claims 66-68, 71, and 72 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Maloberti* (U.S. Patent No. 4,906,137; hereafter "Maloberti"); *Richmond* (U.S. Patent No. 5,582,252; hereafter "Richmond"); and *Luppi* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0158126; hereafter "Luppi").

Applicant has amended base Claim 66, obviating the rejections. Applicant believes that none of the references -- *Maloberti*, *Richmond* and *Luppi*, either alone or any combination -- teach, show, or suggest a pipeline for traversing a topographic seabed, comprising, a first unbuoyed section located subsea and extending from a first location on the seabed; a second unbuoyed section located subsea and extending from a second location on the seabed; and at least one buoyancy section disposed between the first and second unbuoyed sections, as required in Claim 66, as amended and those dependent therefrom. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected Claims 66-69, 71, and 72 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by *Pollack* (WO 2004/068014; hereafter “Pollack”). The Office Action states that *Pollack* “discloses a pipeline comprising a first unbuoyed pipeline section (2), a second unbuoyed pipeline section (3), at least one distributed buoyancy section (6, 25, 26) comprising two or more buoyancy solutions.” The Office Action further states, “[f]rame (25) surrounds (26) and frame (25) comprise buoyancy members (36 or see col. 4 line1); therefore the buoyancy solutions are disposed about an outer diameter of (26).”

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. As the Office Action correctly notes, *Pollack* discloses a bridging duct section (6) that is a pipeline (26) supported by a frame (25) suspended with two buoyancy members (36). The frame (25) and buoyancy members (36) act, in concert, as a single, continuous, unit to support the pipeline (26). The frame (25) cannot act independent of the buoyancy members (36); therefore, the combination of the (25) frame and the buoyancy members (36) are clearly a single unit. Furthermore, the buoyancy members (36) are attached to the frame (25), not the outer diameter of the pipeline section (26), which is in fluid communication with the remaining pipeline system. As such, *Pollack* does not teach, show, or suggest a buoyancy section comprising two or more spatially arranged buoyancy solutions disposed about an outer diameter thereof as in Claim 66 and those dependent therefrom. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected Claims 58-59, 61-62, 64-65 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by *Pollack*. The Office Action states:

Wipo '014 discloses an apparatus (1) to traverse a seabed topographic feature comprising a subsea pipeline (1) constructed to carry fluids from a first location...across the topographic feature to a second location...wherein the topographic feature is selected from the group consisting of subsea basins, domes, valleys, cliffs, canyons, escarpments and combinations thereof, said pipeline including at least one distributed buoyancy region (6, 25, 26) said pipeline comprising a first unbuoyed pipeline section (2) extending from said first location

on a sea floor (4) to said distributed buoyancy region and a second unbuoyed pipeline section (3) extending from said distributed buoyancy region connecting said first and said second pipeline section in fluid communication. The two buoyancy solutions (36, see Figs. 1-5, 7, col. 4 line 1) and the flexible positively buoyant inverse section is considered as the section where (36, see Figs. 1-5, 7, col. 4 line 1 buoyancy members are positioned).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. As discussed above, *Pollack* requires a frame (25) with two buoyancy members (36) to provide a single, continuous, unit to support the pipeline (26). The frame (25) cannot act independent of the buoyancy members (36); therefore, the combination of the (25) frame and the buoyancy members (36) are clearly a single buoyancy unit. Furthermore, the buoyancy members (36) are attached to the frame (25), not the pipeline section (26), which is in fluid communication with the remaining pipeline system. As such, *Pollack* does not teach, show, or suggest a distributed buoyancy region comprising two or more discrete buoyancy solutions disposed thereon to create a positively buoyant inverse catenary section connecting said first and said second pipeline sections in fluid communication, as required in Claim 58 and those dependent therefrom. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claim 69 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Maloberti*; Claim 70 as being unpatentable over *Maloberti* in view of *Moses* (U.S. Patent No. 5,615,977; hereafter “*Moses*”); Claim 69 as being unpatentable over *Richmond*; Claim 70 over *Richmond* in view of *Moses*; and Claims 60 and 70 as being unpatentable over *Pollack* in view of *Moses*.

Applicant has amended base Claims 58 and 66, rendering these rejections moot. Claims 60, 69, and 70 each depend on and include every limitation of its base claim, either Claim 58 or 66; therefore, Claims 60, 69, and 70 are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above

with regard to the base claims. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Having addressed all issues set out in the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are any issues outstanding which have not been addressed to the Examiner's satisfaction.

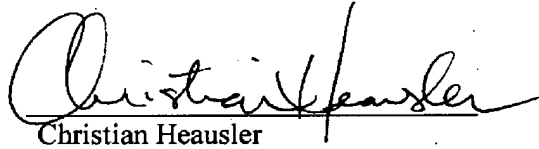
If any fees are due with the noted amendments, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this filing to Deposit Account No. 11-0400 in the name of Kellogg Brown and Root LLC.

Thank you for your time on the matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

2/12/08



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